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## Letter dated 17 October 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Namibia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you a letter from the Frente POLISARIO to the members of the General Assembly and the members of the Security Council on the question of Western Sahara (see annex) and I should be grateful if you would have it circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 18, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Martin **Andjaba**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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## Annex to the letter dated 17 October 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Namibia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: French]

New York, 13 October 2000

On the eve of the Security Council's consideration of the Secretary-General's report, and on instructions from my authorities, I have the honour to inform you of the position of the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el-Hamra y de Río de Oro (Frente POLISARIO) regarding the latest developments in the efforts to settle the question of Western Sahara.

Since it accepted the settlement plan in 1988, the Frente POLISARIO has engaged in faithful, constant and total cooperation with the Secretary-General and the Security Council with a view to implementing the plan and holding the referendum on self-determination, which is its ultimate goal.

It was in this spirit that the Frente POLISARIO contributed decisively to the conclusion of the Houston agreements in 1997 and accepted without hesitation the package of measures proposed by the Secretary-General during his visit to the region in November and December 1998, which gave rise to the protocols on identification and appeals that were formally endorsed by the Security Council in May 1999. It is in this same spirit that the Frente POLISARIO participated, more recently, in meetings held under the auspices of the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy in London in May and June and in Berlin in September 2000, as well as in technical discussions organized by the United Nations in Geneva in July 2000.

The Geneva meeting, which was intended to deal with the difficulties that are currently hindering the continuation of the referendum process, in particular with respect to the question of appeals, did not make any progress whatsoever. Morocco, which in London, one month prior to the meeting, had pledged to Mr. James Baker that it would cooperate in resolving the issue, categorically refused to discuss the question, which nevertheless remains the principal obstacle to the continuation of the settlement process.

At the Berlin meeting, the Frente POLISARIO accepted the proposals put forward by Mr. Baker concerning the confidence measures that were recommended in the context of preparations for the repatriation of refugees, in spite of the shortcomings of the document submitted on that occasion. As usual, the Moroccan delegation rejected the Personal Envoy's proposal on confidence measures, just as it reiterated its refusal to consider the central question of appeals that was once again proposed by Mr. Baker.

Thus, instead of cooperating with the United Nations as it had pledged, the Kingdom of Morocco, which during the past three years has increased the number of obstacles to the implementation of the settlement plan and the holding of the referendum, is today claiming that the plan cannot be implemented and is trying to replace it with an approach that seeks to shelve the plan for good and to legitimize its occupation of Western Sahara.

The Frente POLISARIO rejects this latest tactic by Morocco since it constitutes a perversion of the referendum process being conducted by the United

Nations and a blatant denial of the Saharan people's sacred right to self-determination.

In fact, the abandonment of the settlement plan, which is today publicly advocated by the Kingdom of Morocco, would result in the collapse of the whole edifice so patiently built over the past few years and of which the ceasefire is an inseparable element.

The Frente POLISARIO wishes to reaffirm, once again, its commitment to the settlement plan accepted by the two parties and supported by the entire international community, since it is convinced that only the holding of a free and impartial referendum on self-determination will allow the Saharan people freely to choose their future and settle, in a just and definitive manner, a conflict that has continued for over 25 years.

In this regard, the Frente POLISARIO wishes to reiterate that it is fully prepared to continue the dialogue and negotiations with the Kingdom of Morocco under the auspices of the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General in the strict framework of the settlement plan, the Houston agreements and the protocols of May 1999 in order to overcome the final obstacles to the implementation of the settlement plan and to hold the long-awaited referendum on self-determination as soon as possible.

(*Signed*) Ahmed **Boukhari**
Representative of the Frente POLISARIO